

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-3, 5-9, and 11-13 are pending. Claims 4 and 10 are hereby canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 1, 5-7, and 11-13 are independent. Claims 1, 5-6, 7, and 11-12 are hereby amended. New claim 13, which is similar in scope to claim 6, is hereby added. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment.

Changes to the claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. RESPONSE

Claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 4. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable.

Claim 5 is presented in independent form, including the allowable subject matter of original claims 1 and 5. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 5 is also patentable.

Claim 6 is presented in independent form, including the allowable subject matter of original claims 1 and 6. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 6 is also patentable.

Claims 7, 11, and 13 are similar in scope to claims 1, 5, and 6, respectively, and are patentable for similar reasons.

Claim 12 is similar in scope to claim 1, and is therefore patentable for similar reasons.

Claims 2-3 and 8-9 are dependent from claims 1 and 7, respectively, which were discussed above, and are therefore patentable for at least the same reasons.

CONCLUSION

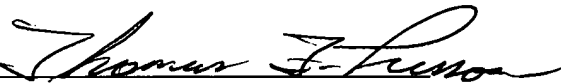
The Examiner is thanked for noting the allowance of original claims 4-6 and 10-11.

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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